

Strengthening Peace and Stability Flagship and Compass of Navigation in the Horn of Africa

The annexation of Eritrea to Ethiopia imposed by the winning powers of World War II has exposed the people of the Horn of Africa since 1952 - to the long drawn out war, conflict, displacement of populations, refugees, underdevelopment, recurrent draught, famine, which sadly resulted in the total dilapidation of the promising Horn of Africa's physical and social infrastructures for more than half a century. The recovery and rehabilitation challenges that this region had to face and tackle after the end of the independence war were daunting and complex as a result.

Although the long trek of the struggle to self-determination of the people of Eritrea was put in the ballot box, and the guns that roared for 30 long years were silenced through referendum, in 1993, the proxy politicking that haunted this region since the end of World War II remained unabated, even after, for the last two decades.

The vacuum left in 1991 by the forced evacuation of the powerful presence of USSR of 17 years - in the Horn of Africa - sucked-in new players to the region. Very rich individuals/extremist groups, including Osama Bin Laden, and new interest groups from far and near, took no time to put-in their ideological and monetary power to fill-up the vacuum. These powerful forces, with their tentacles spread all over our planet, tried all in their means - to deploy fully direct tools of subversion, including and not excluding carrot and stick, to take full control of the Horn of Africa.

Newly independent State of Eritrea born after half a century of political and armed struggle, roughly the size of England straddling on the strategic world trade corridor of the Red Sea 3300 km coast of East Africa - with 354 Islands and islets - bordered by Sudan, Ethiopia and Djibouti, was targeted and attacked, by one after another, from all sides since independence in 1993. The Horn of Africa was simultaneously exploited to the highest level by willful forces in power. The rule of law was given a deaf ear. Humanitarian disasters, piracy, illegal trafficking of human beings, finance, material, illicit drug, arms, ammunition and the prairie fire of corruption have spread engulfing the region for decades until now. Fortunately, these evil toolboxes did not and could not challenge the long history and

cherished course of solidarity of struggle for freedom, equality and justice by the people of Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Reversing the aims and damages inflicted by the different forces involved in the above-mentioned activities, the phenomenal tie-up of common past and destiny once again bear fruit to the Eritrea Ethiopia Peace and Friendship Agreement signed in Asmara on July 9, 2018.

This peace is based on our common struggle, resilience and trusts of the people of Eritrea and Ethiopia and has no illusion of the power and capacity of the dark forces both upstream and downstream. This historic agreement is also aware of the continued challenges that can be posed by the same forces of darkness. At the same time, Eritrea and Ethiopia have high expectation that the “international community” is currently convinced fully and shall unequivocally desist reviving any of the past experiences of the rules of military engagements in the Horn of Africa. And they will be firmly willing and ready to promote and opt to engage constructively, with the only best future option availed by this agreement, i.e. to build partnerships through mutual efforts of boosting peace, stability, prosperity and cooperation in the Horn of Africa.

Peace building within this historic and very important region of the Horn of Africa also means peace to the Nile Basin countries, Middle East and beyond.

Japan has fully embraced strengthening peace and stability as a flagship and compass of navigation for its cooperation with the Horn of Africa in TICAD7 Yokohama 2019. Building mutual trust based on concrete diplomacy of common interest is the benchmark now.

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